



Resolution 855 (1986)¹

Equality between men and women

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Affirming the equal dignity of both sexes, and emphasising that equality of opportunity between men and women as well as the removal of discrimination as defined in the report of its Social and Health Affairs Committee ([Doc. 5502](#)) are an expression of democratic values and human rights ;
2. Considering that equality between men and women implies that both sexes are given the same opportunities to develop their resources in all aspects of their working, political, family and cultural life ;
3. Noting the obstacles to equality between men and women in law and regulations, in education systems, in stereotyped attitudes, and underlining the need to use a variety of means to combat different forms of discrimination encountered by women in day-to-day working life ;
4. Considering that it is in the interest of both parents and of society that children grow up in conditions which are as favourable and secure as possible and that the best interest of children must come first, and that the family continues to play a central role in modern society ;
5. Recalling that equality can only be achieved by changing the roles of both women and men, and that to this end a new and more even division of labour and responsibilities between women and men must be brought about ;
6. Stressing the need for women, through education and training, to broaden their choices of occupation and their inclination to enter non-traditional fields of work ;
7. Stressing that women must have real opportunities to use their experience and values to enrich the areas in which men currently predominate ; similarly men should bring their experience and values into family life and occupations which at present are typically female ;
8. Reaffirming the need for a broad-based campaign to provide information and influence public opinion to change attitudes and tackle prejudices ;
9. Aware of the existing violence against women ;
10. Concerned with the special difficulties encountered by immigrant women ;
11. Recalling its Recommendations 741 (1974) on the legal position of women, and 1008 (1985) on women in politics, but also various texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers with regard to the situation of women, in particular Resolution (77) 1, on women's employment, which introduced, among others, the principle of equal pay for equal work ;
12. Regretting that so far thirteen member states of the Council of Europe have not yet ratified the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women ;
13. Welcoming the fact that in the last few years the principle of equality is being integrated in the work programme of the Council of Europe in an interdisciplinary approach,

1. Assembly debate on 27 January 1986 (21st Sitting) (see [Doc. 5502](#), report of the Social and Health Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1986 (21st Sitting).



14. Urges the 1st European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men, which will take place from 3 to 5 March 1986, to invite the governments of member states :
- a. to enact family, social and tax legislation in respect to equality of men and women ;
 - b. to ensure that efforts in schools aim at promoting equality, by eliminating for instance sex stereotypes in some school books, by providing special training for teachers, and by encouraging young people who would like to enter fields of activity other than traditional ;
 - c. to conceive measures which ensure respect for the dignity of women in advertising ;
 - d. to pay special attention to research programmes where male predominance of subjects and methods prevails, and make it easier for women researchers to enter such programmes by removing existing obstacles, thus complementing and enriching these programmes from the point of view of female researchers ;
 - e. to introduce measures on equality between women and men at work :
 1. by underlining the need for working life to be organised in such a way as to allow men to assume responsibility for looking after their children and take their share in household work ;
 2. by considering that a general reduction and/or reorganisation of working time would be one way of giving both parents larger possibilities ; pending such a reform a readjustment of working hours for parents of young children could be considered ;
 3. by accepting that women, as well as men, be entitled to paid leave from work in order to enable them to look after their young children, and by considering an extension of the social security system in this regard ;
 - f. to promote good day-care for children which makes it easier for both parents to go out to work ;
 - g. to enact legislation which provides for mandatory prosecution for all kinds of assaults or sexual abuses of women, including acts of violence taking place in the home, and to create help facilities for both parties involved in cases of assault and support for the injured party ;
 - h. to give support to special organisations for immigrant women in order to pull them out of their isolation, and with the particular emphasis that immigrant women must be allowed to learn the language of their host country and know its culture as soon as possible ;
 - i. to provide information and influence public opinion in order to change attitudes and tackle prejudices ;
 - j. to take measures to put a stop to the practice of "importing" women from Third World countries and exploiting them in degrading and humiliating situations, and to abolish this new form of slave trade in respect of European women too ;
 - k. to ensure that responsibility for equality issues is a direct matter for governments, and to ensure that machinery is set up for promoting and supervising observance of equality principles ;
 - l. if they have not done so yet, to ratify the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women ;
15. Invites the conference to include in its recommendations to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe that the latter should :
- a. consider that the Council of Europe should have as a medium-term goal special responsibility as co-ordinator of efforts for equality between the sexes in the member states ;
 - b. consider as a further goal the harmonisation of policies in the United Nations with special attention to the situation of women in developing countries ;
 - c. prolong the term of reference of the Committee of experts for Equality between Women and Men (CAHFM) after 1986 ;
 - d. take this resolution into account when updating the relevant provisions of the European Social Charter.